

## Message Text

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ORIGIN STR-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 AGR-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07

FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-02 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 TAR-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 OIC-02 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-06 NEA-10

/132 R

DRAFTED BY STR:HWILLIAMS:JT  
APPROVED BY STR:GFEKETEKUTY  
USDA:GRASER  
COMMERCE:DSCHLECHTY  
STATE:WBARRACLOUGH  
LABOR:FLAVALLEE  
TREASURY:EGREEN

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O 222140Z MAY 75  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USDEL MTN GENEVA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 120232

E.O. 11652:GDS  
TAGS:ETRD,MTN  
SUBJECT:U.S.POSITION-MTN GRAINS SUBGROUP MEETING:MAY 26,  
1975

### 1. PROBLEM

THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE U.S. IN THIS FIRST MEETING  
OF THE SUBGROUP ARE TO IMPRESS UPON OTHER COUNTRIES (1)  
THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. PLACES ON TRADE LIBERALIZATION IN  
GRAINS AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MTN RESPECTING  
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AGRICULTURE: (2) THAT STABILIZATION OF WORLD MARKETS  
CAN BE MATERIALLY ENHANCED THROUGH SUCH LIBERALIZATION:  
(3) THAT THE U.S. INTENDS TO SEEK COMMON TRADING RULES  
FOR INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE

IN THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONAL GROUPS; AND (4) THAT THE U.S. CANNOT AGREE TO ANY EXCLUSIVE NEGOTIATING APPROACH TO GRAINS AT THIS TIME. IT IS ALSO, HOWEVER, AN OBJECTIVE OF THE U.S. TO AVOID AN UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE EC SO SOON AFTER REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE SUBGROUP'S CREATION.

A SPECIAL PROBLEM COULD ARISE SHOULD THE EC INSIST ON A SUBGROUP REPORT TO THE MAY 29 IWC MEETING SETTING OUT THE PRIMACY OF THE SUBGROUP FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF ANY EVENTUAL AGREEMENT ON WORLD FOOD RESERVES.

## 2. U.S. POSITION

THE DELEGATIONS SHOULD:

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(L) SET A POSITIVE TONE FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE SUBGROUP, STATING CLEARLY THAT THE U.S. REGARDS GRAIN TRADE LIBERALIZATION AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MTN IN AGRICULTURE AND THAT IT INTENDS TO EXERT ITS UTMOST EFFORTS TO COOPERATE IN A FLEXIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE VARIOUS RELEVANT NEGOTIATING GROUPS AND TO ACHIEVE A SIGNIFICANT RESULT IN THIS VITAL SECTOR: AND, DRAWING ON POINTS 2 AND 3 OF THE DISCUSSION BELOW, OUTLINE THE MAJOR GRAINS PROBLEMS AND RELEVANT CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AS SEEN BY THE U.S.

(2) REITERATE THAT IT WILL BE MOST VALUABLE, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE OVERALL TOKYO DECLARATION OBJECTIVES OF EXPANDING AND LIBERALIZING TRADE, TO SEEK TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE, COMMON TRADING RULES FOR INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TARIFFS AND NON-TARIFFS MEASURES GROUPS ARE BEST SUITED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE.

(3) TAKE NOTE OF THE ONGOING WORK OF THE IWC ON GRAIN RESERVES AND EXPRESS SATISFACTION THAT THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT IN FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE HAS GAINED THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR GRAIN PRODUCING AND TRADING COUNTRIES. IF THE QUESTION OF THE LINK BETWEEN THE LONDON GRAINS DISCUSSION AND THE WORK OF THE GRAINS SUBGROUP IN GENEVA SHOULD ARISE U.S. DEL SHOULD REITERATE LANGUAGE AGREED TO IN PARAGRAPH 5(A) OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP CHAIRMAN'S SUMMING UP OF THE MAY 8, 1975 MEETING (MTN/AG/1).

(4) THE DELEGATION MAY ALSO NOTE THAT TRADE LIBERALIZATION REPRESENTS A FURTHER MEANS OF SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCING WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND MARKET STABILIZATION AND THE EFFORTS OF THE SUBGROUP AND THE IWC SHOULD BE

COMPLEMENTARY.

(5) IF THE EC PRESENTS A FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION OF A PRICE-BASED INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY AGREEMENT AS THE SINGLE NEGOTIATING TECHNIQUE FOR GRAINS, THE U.S. SHOULD DRAW ON DISCUSSION POINT 5 TO SUMMARIZE MAJOR U.S. OBJECTIONS TO AN INTERNATIONAL PRICING ARRANGEMENT AND INDICATE THAT ALTHOUGH THE U.S. IS WILLING TO CONSIDER ALL COUNTRIES' PROPOSALS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, IT WOULD BE PREMATURE FOR THE SUBGROUP TO TAKE UP SUCH A PROPOSAL BEFORE IT HAS EVEN DETERMINED WHICH ASPECTS OF GRAIN TRADE IT WISHES TO ADDRESS. MOREOVER, THE U.S. CONCEPT OF NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES IN GRAINS IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ADMINISTERED PRICE CONCEPT OF THE EC, AND IT WOULD BE HIGHLY

INAPPROPRIATE TO LAUNCH THE WORK OF THE SUBGROUP ON THE BASIS OF ONE APPROACH WITHOUT HAVING CONSIDERED THE MERITS OF OTHERS.

(6) SINCE WORK IN THE TARIFF AND NTM GROUPS IS STILL AT A PRELIMINARY STAGE, AND SINCE THE PUBLIC AND INDUSTRY ADVISORY MECHANISMS REQUIRED BY THE TRADE ACT ARE NOT YET FULLY OPERATIONAL, THE DELEGATION SHOULD NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN PROPOSING A WORK PROGRAM. AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME FOR THE U.S. WOULD BE AN AIRING OF VIEWS WITH NO FINAL WORK PROGRAM ESTABLISHED. HOWEVER, IF NECESSARY TO AVERT ADOPTION OF A WORK PROGRAM ANTI-THETICAL TO U.S. INTERESTS, THE DELEGATION MAY PROPOSE, AS A CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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THAT THE SUBGROUP SEEK A WIDER AREA OF AGREEMENT BEFORE DECIDING ON A NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. SPECIFICALLY, IT MAY SUGGEST A WORK PROGRAM TO CONSIDER SYSTEMATICALLY, IN RELATION TO THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND PROBLEMS OF GRAINS, THE MAJOR TRADE MEASURES, AND TECHNIQUES AND MODALITIES FOR DEALING WITH THOSE MEASURES, THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE GATT AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE (SEE DISCUSSION POINT 4). THE DELEGATION MAY FURTHER PROPOSE THAT SUCH AN EXAMINATION, BASED ON A SECRETARIAT REPORT ANALYZING THE TRADE MEASURES OF MAJOR GRAIN TRADING COUNTRIES, BEGIN AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE SUBGROUP AND BE CONCLUDED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

(7) SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY FOR THE DELEGATE TO EXPRES U.S. VIEWS ON COMMODITY COVERAGE IN THE SUBGROUP, HE MAY INDICATE THAT THE PROBLEMS OF TRADE IN PROCESSED PRODUCTS OFTEN HAVE INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS DIFFERENT FROM THE TRADITIONALLY GENERIC CATEGORY OF WHOLE GRAINS AND

FLOUR WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE GREAT BULK OF TRADE AND

WHICH WOULD, THEREFORE APPEAR TO BE THE APPROPRIATE FOCUS FOR THE SUBGROUP. HOWEVER, ON RICE (WHICH SOME COUNTRIES DO NOT WANT INCLUDED) THE U.S. DEL MAY STATE THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT REACHED A DECISION AND WISHES TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF OTHER DELEGATIONS AND OF ITS INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUPS BEFORE TAKING A POSITION.

(8) SHOULD THE EC PROPOSE AN EARLY RESUMPTION OF THE SUBGROUP MEETING FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE IWC MEETING IN LONDON, THE DELEGATION MAY RESPOND AS APPROPRIATE, TO MEET THE U.S. OBJECTIVES SET OUT ABOVE.

#### DISCUSSION.

1. THE U.S. REGARDS GRAIN TRADE LIBERALIZATION AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MTN IN AGRICULTURE. NOT ONLY DO GRAINS ACCOUNT FOR 20 PERCENT OF THE VALUE OF WORLD AGRICULTURAL TRADE, A 1974 ESTIMATE (FAR AHEAD OF ANY OTHER AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY) AND FOR 50 PERCENT (12 BILLION DOLLARS) THIS YEAR OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS, BUT WORLD GRAIN TRADE, BOTH COMMERCIAL AND CONCESSIONAL, IS THE SINGLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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FACTOR SUSTAINING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN FOOD DEFICIT COUNTRIES.

2. YET IN SPITE OF THESE FACTS, THE EFFICIENCY OF WORLD GRAIN PRODUCTION AND TRADE CONTINUES TO BE IMPAIRED BY EXTRAORDINARY BORDER MEASURES AND NARROWLY CONCEIVED NATIONAL POLICIES IN MAJOR COUNTRIES PARTICULAR PROBLEMS RELATING TO MARKET ACCESS AND WORLD MARKET STABILITY ARISE ALSO IN THE CASE OF STATE TRADING COUNTRIES.

DURING THE WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEES -- AND IN PARTICULAR OF COMMITTEE 3(E) -- THESE AND OTHER MAJOR PROBLEMS WERE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH. A MAJOR CONCERN WAS THE TENDENCY OF GRAIN BALANCES TO SHIFT ABRUPTLY BETWEEN SURPLUS AND SHORTAGE AND, IN RECENT YEARS, OF PRICES TO FLUCTUATE UNPREDICTABLY AND WIDELY. IT WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT, ALTHOUGH SOME FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INSTABILITY WERE BEYOND THE REACH OF TRADE MEASURES (I.E., WEATHER, GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS INFLUENCING CONSUMPTION, AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN DIETS AND CONSUMPTION PATTERNS), THE TRADE POLICIES OF MANY COUNTRIES HAD INFLUENCED AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, THE RESTRICTIVE TRADE POLICIES OF SOME COUNTRIES HAD PREVENTED THE VOLUME OF GRAIN FEEDING IN THE WORLD FROM RISING AND FALLING IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN WORLD PRICE AND SUPPLY CONDITIONS. ALSO, THE ACTIONS OF SOME COUNTRIES TO WITHHOLD GRAIN STOCKS FROM WORLD MARKETS DURING PERIODS OF RELATIVE TIGHTNESS OF SUPPLY HAD ADDED FURTHER

TO PRESSURE ON WORLD PRICES.

A LONG-TERM PROBLEM RECOGNIZED BY MANY COUNTRIES  
WAS THE CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY OF ACCESS TO MAJOR MARKETS

WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO PERIODIC UNDER INVESTMENT AND UNDER  
EMPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES IN GRAIN PRODUCTION AS WELL AS TO  
A CONTINUING UNECONOMIC PATTERN OF WORLD GRAIN PRODUCTION  
RAISING THE COST OF FOOD AND, IN EFFECT, LEVYING A TAX ON  
WORLD CONSUMPTION.

ACCENTUATING THE PROBLEM OF MARKET ACCESS HAD BEEN THE  
1974 ESTIMATE  
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USE OF EXPORT SUBSIDIES WHICH DISRUPTED THIRD COUNTRY  
MARKETS AND LED TO A DELIBERATE CUTTING BACK OF PRODUCTION  
BY EFFICIENT PRODUCING COUNTRIES, LEAVING THE WORLD MORE  
VULNERABLE TO SUBSEQUENT SHORTAGES CAUSED BY CLIMATIC FAC-  
TORS.

3. THE U.S. RECOGNIZES THAT THERE IS NO SINGLE SIMPLE  
ANSWER TO THESE PROBLEMS OF WORLD GRAIN TRADE, BUT BELIEVES  
THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE MTN SHOULD BE TO LOOK FOR LONG-  
TERM SOLUTIONS -- CONCENTRATING ON THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE  
OF TEN TO 20 YEARS -- TO ENSURE THAT GENUINE PROGRESS IS  
MADE IN REDUCING EXCESSIVELY PROTECTIONIST GOVERNMENT  
POLICIES, IN INCREASING MARKET ACCESS, AND IN RATIONALIZ-  
ING WORLD PRODUCTION AND TRADE PATTERNS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE  
FUTURE FOOD SUPPLIES ON AN ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT BASIS.

AMONG THE ACTIONS THE SUBGROUP MAY WISH TO CONSIDER  
ARE THE ELIMINATION OF EXPORT SUBSIDIES, A MAJOR LIBERAL-  
IZATION OF NONTARIFF IMPORT MEASURES, THE ESTABLISHMENT  
AND BINDING OF REASONABLE CEILINGS ON THE TOTAL ASSESSMENT  
OF DUTIES AND OTHER MONETARY CHARGES ON IMPORTS, AND IM-  
PROVED RULES ON ACCESS OF IMPORTING COUNTRIES TO AVAILABLE  
EXPORT SUPPLIES. IT WOULD ALSO PROMOTE MORE DEPENDABLE  
GRAIN DEMAND/SUPPLY BALANCES BY ENCOURAGING INTENSIFIED  
PRODUCTION IN THE MOST EFFICIENT PRODUCING AREAS AND  
BY INCREASING ACCESS TO AVAILABLE STOCKS.

4. TRADE LIBERALIZATION (CONTINUING MARKET AND SUPPLY  
ACCESS) WOULD ALSO INCREASE MARKET PRICE STABILITY BY PRO-  
VIDING GREATER SCOPE FOR ADJUSTMENTS IN PRODUCTION AND  
CONSUMPTION IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING MARKET CONDITIONS.

5. THE U.S. RECOGNIZES THAT SOME COUNTRIES WILL ANALYZE  
THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF WORLD GRAIN TRADE DIFFERENTLY AND  
WILL HAVE DIFFERING PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SOLUTIONS. THE U.S.  
THEREFORE BELIEVES THAT AN APPROPRIATE INITIAL TASK FOR  
THE SUBGROUP WOULD BE TO SEEK A WIDER AREA OF AGREEMENT

THROUGH A SYSTEMATIC EXAMINATION OF COUNTRIES' IDEAS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC APPROACHES MIGHT BE  
MOST FRUITFULLY APPLIED TO NEGOTIATIONS ON GRAINS. IT  
ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE EXAMINATION SHOULD BE COMPREHENSIVE  
AND THAT THE PROCEDURE SHOULD FOLLOW A LOGICAL AND NEUTRAL  
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COURSE SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF ALL PARTICI-  
PANTS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. SPECIFICALLY, THE DELEGA-  
TION MAY PROPOSE THAT THE SUBGROUP BASE ITS EXAMINATION ON  
THE 1972 REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TECHNICIANS AND  
MODALITIES OF THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE. IN PREPARATION  
FOR SUCH AN EXAMINATION, THE SECRETARIAT COULD PREPARE  
A REPORT, FOR PRIOR CIRCULATION TO MEMBER COUNTRIES,  
SUMMARIZING AND ANALYZING ACCORDING TO THE FORMAT OF THE

1972 REPORT THE TRADE MEASURES EMPLOYED BY MAJOR GRAIN  
TRADING COUNTRIES.

THE PAPER (TO FOLLOW), COMMODITY GROUP WORK PROGRAMS  
MAY BE DRAWN ON BY THE DELEGATION IN ORDER TO DESCRIBE  
IN GREATER DETAIL HOW AN EXAMINATION OF MEASURES, TECHNI-  
QUES AND MODALITIES RELATING TO GRAINS NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT  
PROCEED.

6. BY MAKING A POSITIVE SUGGESTION CONCERNING A WORK  
PROGRAM FOR THE SUBGROUP, THE U.S. MAY BE ABLE TO DEFLECT  
THE EXPECTED MAJOR EC INITIATIVE TO OBTAIN IMMEDIATE CON-  
SIDERATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY  
AGREEMENT FOR GRAINS, BASED PRIMARILY ON ADMINISTERED  
TARGET PRICES, AND SUPPORTED BY PRICE-TRIGGERED STOCKPIL-  
ING PROVISIONS (INTO WHICH ANY CONCEPT OF WORLD FOOD  
SECURITY WOULD BE SUBSUMED). ALTHOUGH THE U.S. SHOULD NOT  
ENGAGE THE EC IN AN IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION SO LONG AS  
THE SUBGROUP RESOLVES ITS WORK PROGRAM IN SUCH A WAY THAT  
DOES NOT PREJUDICE U.S. OBJECTIVES, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT  
THE DELEGATION RESPOND TO A MAJOR EC INITIATIVE BY PLACING  
ON THE RECORD AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING U.S. VIEWS:

A. EXPERIENCE WITH PAST INTERNATIONAL GRAINS AGREE-  
MENT HAS MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT ADMINISTERED PRICE  
AGREEMENTS WHICH DO NOT DEAL WITH PRODUCTION AND TRADE  
POLICIES -- THE MAJOR LONG-RUN DETERMINANTS OF SUPPLY  
BALANCES -- DO NOT AND CANNOT WORK. INTERNATIONAL PRICE  
DISCIPLINE CANNOT BE MAINTAINED IN THE FACE OF SIGNIFICANT  
SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS.

B. THE VERY ATTEMPT TO ADMINISTER WORLD GRAIN  
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PRICES WOULD TEND TO FREEZE EXISTING PATTERNS OF PRODUCTION, PREVENT NECESSARY YEAR-TO-YEAR ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN AND AMONG FOOD AND FEED GRAINS, AS WELL AS BETWEEN GRAINS AND COMPETING CROPS, AND WOULD INHIBIT THE DESIRABLE ADJUSTMENT OF CONSUMPTION TO NON-CONTROLLABLE FLUCTUATIONS IN PRODUCTION (E.G., WEATHER, DISEASE, INPUT SHORTAGES, ETC.).

C. THE INEVITABLE TENDENCY TO SET INTERNATIONALLY-ADMINISTERED PRICES AT RELATIVELY HIGH LEVELS WOULD REINFORCE UNECONOMIC PRODUCTION, PLACING A BURDEN ON AND REDUCING WORLD FOOD CONSUMPTION.

D. AN INTERNATIONAL PRICING ARRANGEMENT WOULD INHIBIT TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND WOULD BE IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH A MARKET-ORIENTED AGRICULTURAL POLICY. INGERSOLL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 26 AUG 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, GRAINS, COMMITTEE MEETINGS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE120232  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** STR:HWILLIAMS:JT  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 GDS  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** D750180-0513  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t197505103/baaaakmx.tel  
**Line Count:** 345  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN STR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 11 APR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <11 APR 2003 by Izenbel0>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** n/a  
**TAGS:** ETRD, EAGR, US, EEC, MTN  
**To:** MTN GENEVA  
LONDON  
EC BRUSSELS  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006